



BULLETIN

October
2008

STATE OF IDAHO

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GOVERNOR**

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If you would like to receive the bulletin via email,
just email Jennel Binsky at
jennel.binsky@veterans.idaho.gov

FROM TOM'S DESK

Fall is here and how about those 49ers?! I'm booking my reservations to the Super Bowl as I write. Well, maybe not just yet. I hope the summer was as enjoyable for you as it was for my wife and me. The time just passes too fast.

Our annual Service Officers Training Conference was held at the Double Tree Riverside Hotel in Boise in August and was very successful. I really appreciate those of you who attended, as it demonstrates to me you really take the opportunity to serve Idaho's veterans seriously. As you well know, this is a vocation requiring continual education. Dave Brasuell, our Division Administrator, and I have reviewed the course critiques and will use some of your ideas for improvement at next year's conference.

During the school, we were invited by Jim Vance, the VA Regional Office Director, to attend the groundbreaking ceremony for the new VA Regional Office Building. The Idaho Veterans Assistance League (IVAL) provided the funds to contract two buses to transport the class attendees to the ceremony. Thanks, IVAL, for your support of this event and for all you do for our veteran programs throughout the year. The ceremony was very well done and we're excited to see concrete being poured. Look for a ribbon cutting ceremony about this time next year.

A note to all Service Officers; Jacques Chung-Hee, one of our outstanding State Service Officers, asked me to pass along a suggestion regarding pension claims. Due to all pension claims processing being centralized at the VA Regional Office in St. Paul, we recommend you add a statement to any pension claim documentation that you are requesting it be forwarded to St. Paul. I realize you are stating, what seems to be, the obvious, but it will help in the flow of paperwork.

As always, I encourage you to read each of the articles in this Bulletin and share your copy with another veteran. Have a great Fall and don't forget to vote!

IDAHO STATE VETERANS HOME – POCATELLO

VOLUNTEER SERVICES, Carey Hebdon

The Idaho Veterans Olympics at our Home here in Pocatello was a huge success this year. On behalf of our residents and staff, many thanks go out to the sponsors who make this great event possible. Please know that every ounce of effort -- your time, your resources, and your consideration -- are so appreciated. This year, a barbeque lunch followed the morning's ceremonies, games, and award presentations. We hope the American Legion and Auxiliary, the Fleet Reserve Auxiliary, Military Order of the Purple Heart, VFW Posts 63 and 735 and Auxiliaries, Marine Corps League, POW*MIA Rally Association, Highland High School, and the many other volunteers will continue to make the Veterans Olympics possible.

The Southeast Idaho Homeless Stand Down will be held October 11th at the Bannock County Fair Grounds Buildings A & B. There are still needs in the way of donations such as coffee, creamer, and sugar, as well as funds for food items and toiletry kits that must be purchased. If anyone is interested in volunteering that day or helping with a donation, large or small, please contact Shannon at 221-1294 or 237-1294. I or Lauretta are also available at 236-6340.

Our Volunteer Appreciation Social will be held at 2:30 p.m. on October 23rd in the Home's dining room. All volunteers are invited, so please let me know if you can attend.

Our Veterans Day Program will be November 11th at 2:30 p.m. Colonel Hollingsworth, USA Ret. and a professor at BYU Idaho in Idaho Falls, will be the guest speaker. Spirit of Freedom Awards from Senator Mike Crapo will be presented. The public is invited, so please plan to attend.

Christmas is just around the corner. The awesome generosity that makes this time of year meaningful for our residents, comes from the wonderful organizations and individuals who remember our "heroes on the hill." Updated information for the VFW Adopt-A-Vet Program is in the works and will be mailed out soon. If you or your organization is interested in sponsoring one of our residents, please contact me. It is only through your generosity and kindness, the present quality of life our precious residents enjoy is made possible.

Thank you, forever and always, for being our partner in "Caring for America's Heroes."

IDAHO STATE VETERANS HOMES

Local service officers, family or friends who may know of interested eligible veterans are asked to encourage them to make application for admittance to the home in their geographic area. Call or write to the following for more information and/or applications.

✱ Idaho State Veterans Home - Boise

Cody Schaner
320 Collins Road
Boise, ID 83702
(208) 246-8736

✱ Idaho State Veterans Home - Lewiston

Sara Alway
821 - 21st Avenue
Lewiston, ID 83501
(208) 799-3422

✱ Idaho State Veterans Home - Pocatello

Darcel Cook
1957 Alvin Ricken Drive
Pocatello ID 83201
(208) 236-6340

IDAHO STATE VETERANS HOME – BOISE

VOLUNTEER SERVICES, Phil Hawkins

Through September of this year, many great activities were enjoyed by our veterans and family members, along with the host of volunteers. We attended several Boise Hawks games thanks to donations from several groups. If you or your organization would like to be a part of Hawks Baseball next year, just give me a call and I'll give you the breakdown on the costs, etc. The Boise Hawks support staff do an outstanding job helping our veterans.

Some of the other activities over the past three months included Les Bois horse races, barbecues, rodeos, trips to senior centers around the valley, musical programs, bingo games, a Hawaiian luau, the fantastic motorcycle rally in mid-August (always a highlight, particularly for those who are able to ride on someone's cycle), bowling, fishing with the VA and National Guard, our Nintendo Wii game days, the Mountain Home Air Show, and Crus'n and Classics with the American Graffiti stars. This summer has really been great!

Thanks to all who helped with this year's Veterans Olympics. It was our 21st year, with this year's theme being "Celebrating Courage." The torch lighters this year were Loren Stricklin, a WWII Army veteran representing the Idaho State Veterans Home; Ken Craft, a Korean Era veteran representing the VA Medical Center; and a group of current service members from Gowen Field and Mountain Home AFB who all recently returned from service in Iraq or Afghanistan. Those service members were SK2 Elizabeth Lahny, Navy Reserves, Operation Iraqi Freedom; SGT Byron Byrum, Marines Reserves, Operation Iraqi Freedom; SSgt. Tony D. Hill, Idaho Air National Guard, Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom; SSG James Lorenzon, Idaho Army National Guard, Operation Iraqi Freedom; and SrA Jeff Pligrean, 366 Fighter Wing, Mountain Home Air Force Base, Bagram, Afghanistan. All our veteran participants received a blue t-shirt with the 2008 logo and a participation medal. First and second place winners in the individual events also received gold and silver medals, respectively. Thanks so much for all your support of this year's Veterans Olympics. I also want to thank all those who helped provide the t-shirts, medals, etc., as well as to the Military Order of the Purple Heart and the Military Retirees for providing the participation medals. Thanks also to the Fleet Reserve and Ladies Auxiliary of the Fleet Reserve for helping provide the pins and the baked beans for this year. And finally, thanks to the Marine Corps League members and the Nampa Rod and Gun Club who made it possible for us to add the target shooting competition at their facility.

We had a great poem in this year's program that I would like to share with all of you:

THANKS TO THE AMERICAN WARRIORS

From the colonist, who rebelled,
to the soldier of today,
My thanks, be to you,
I know not what else to say.

Thanks to our American heroes,
whose devotion is second to none,
Whose courage and braveness alone
caused many battles to be won.

Only because of you and the price
you willingly did pay,
Only because of you,
Old Glory still flies today!

Since the words I do not have,
to give the tribute that is due,
So a simple heartfelt thanks,
sincerely I give to you.

We have beaten the forces of evil
and carried our flag far and wide,
Because of our American Warriors,
our hearts are filled with pride,

-- *Author unknown* --

On October 5th, we will hold the 18th Annual Parking Lot Party in the Home's front parking lot, sponsored by the various antique car clubs throughout the Treasure Valley. We had approximately 75 antique cars – Model A's, Model T's, etc., on display last year and expect that number again. This is a fund raising activity for the Activity Department to help with the cost of our Veterans Christmas parties, and to support other activities by providing funds for tickets to outings such as ball games. The activities will start at 11 a.m. and go until 2 p.m. There will be raffle prizes, music, and entertainment. We'll need help getting our veterans out to see the cars and enjoy the day, so if you can volunteer, come on down. And don't forget the Chili cook off, as your entry could win you dinner for two at – where else? – Chili's! There's no entry fee, just bring a small crockpot of your favorite chili and join in the fun. Thanks in advance to the Marine Corps League for cooking the hot dogs, brats, and hamburgers, to the American Legion and Auxiliary folks for helping with the raffle, and, of course, to the Jefferies family and Ralph for agreeing to entertain.

This year's Halloween Party, sponsored by DAVA, will start at 2:00 p.m. on the 31st in the dining room. There'll be a Halloween costume contest and a pumpkin decorating contest for the residents and staff. We need volunteers for this fun event as well. The Veterans Day Parade will be November 8th in Downtown Boise. Our bus will be a part of this patriotic event and we hope to see many of you there.

On Veterans Day, November 11th, our program will be hosted by Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 63. Details are still being worked out, but we do know we need you all to bring your colors and stands so we can post them in the back of the room, and we hope you'll join us for this very important event at the Idaho State Veterans Home in Boise. Colors need to be present prior to 10:30 a.m., as the program will start promptly at 11:00 a.m.

We're once again looking forward to the annual American Legion Food Convoy on November 15th. This event continues to be a very important program for us, as the food helps supplement our Dietary Department. The monetary donations help with food related programs and activities such as special meals in our dining room, as well as providing food on outings where eating at the event is the normal thing to do, such as going to a baseball game and having a hot dog and a beverage. I also want to let the Legion and Auxiliary know how much their visits with our veterans mean when they come for the Food Convoy.

Our veterans will again enjoy the annual Festival of Trees on the November 26th, the day before Thanksgiving. If you want to help with the event this year, contact Cindy Tatro, Activity Coordinator, at 246-8752, or call me at 246-8750. Speaking of special things the American Legion and Auxiliary do for us, this year's ALA Gift Shop will be on December 6th and 7th. The evening of December 6th, Idaho Power Company will once again sponsor the Luminous Lantern Parade. Just a reminder, we will need a lot of cookies for that evening, as we anticipate about 200 kids will attend. We also need volunteers to serve and join in the parade. This year's Christmas party will be held December 24th at 2:00 p.m.

Our Forever Yours program, which provides an anniversary celebration for our married residents who wish to celebrate their anniversaries, continues to be one of our most popular and successful programs.

Again, thanks goes out to each and every one of you volunteers. I invite those of you who have time to come by and visit, as we'd love to see you. And again, if you want to come volunteer, please contact me at 246-8750.

IDAHO STATE VETERANS HOME – LEWISTON VOLUNTEER SERVICES, Terri Brockman

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The residents have been busy this quarter, are looking forward to some of the upcoming fall events, and are getting ready for the busy holiday season.

We started July off with a bang at our annual 4th of July picnic and fireworks. American Legion Post #13 donated the fireworks and volunteers assisted them in the production of the show. We were also honored to have a new group to our facility this month; the Irish Dancers from Cottonwood, a group of talented young woman who performed their Irish dances. We look forward to them coming again. We kicked off our new After Hours Dining program in July. Eldon, a resident of our Home, and his family were the first to have a special dinner sponsored and served by the 8/40. They provided a wonderful meal in a restaurant style setting in our new activity room named 'The old Timers Café'. Eldon was the winner of the contest to name our café.

The hot days of summer in August were spent with an array of different activities. We started off the month with a visit from the Legacy Vets Vietnam Motorcycle club from Northern Idaho, who held a parade of motorcycles for the residents in our parking lot. They are looking forward to returning annually for this event, as are our residents. The VFW and VFW Auxiliary District I held a BBQ, where the residents enjoyed the wonderful food and company very much. We held our 2nd After Hours Dining for one of our residents and his family. The experience of dining in a restaurant like atmosphere and being served was a great experience for this resident and his family, as they aren't not able to go out into the community. August was also the month of our Annual Hawaiian Days celebration. The residents enjoyed the Luau with their traditional dinner and awesome music.

September was a busy month for our residents. We kicked off the month with a visit to the Rodeo the evening of the 5th. The Elks sponsored the night out by providing the residents with tickets. On September 6th, the residents rode the bus through the Veteran's day parade and enjoyed waving at the parade watchers as they passed by. On September 11th, we held a remembrance for all those lives lost on that terrifying day in 2001. On September 12th and 13th, our valley veteran's organizations sponsored a food drive, where individuals from the American Legion and Auxiliary, Veterans of Foreign Wars and Auxiliary, the DAV, and the Fleet Reserve sat outside of our area supermarkets collecting food and monetary donations for our Home's residents. We're ready and excited for the food deliveries from the North Idaho VFW and Auxiliary on September 25th and the North Idaho American Legion Food Convoy on October 17th. We thank all the veterans' organizations and the community members for continuing to support our veterans. Our residents also enjoyed an outing to the Nez Perce County Fair, where they toured the pavilion, the live stock arenas, and the vendor markets, as well as enjoying the best of the fair food. Everyone had a great time! September found us preparing for our Annual Veterans Olympics on the 26th. This event is enjoyed by all the residents, volunteers, staff, and families, and was kicked off by a parade led by the Lewiston High School Marching Band. The residents spent the morning competing in an array of events for that gold medal, and finished off the day with a heroes lunch consisting of fried chicken and all the trimmings. We look forward to this event each and every year and it was a huge success again!

Many volunteer opportunities are available here at our Home. We need volunteer help in the canteen, visiting with residents, and playing bingo and cards. Anyone who enjoys singing, playing instruments, and entertaining our troops are encouraged to schedule a place on our activity calendar. If you would like to join the group of caring individuals who volunteer at the Home, please contact me at 799-3422, or stop by the Idaho State Veterans Home in Lewiston located at 821 21st Avenue.

IDAHO STATE VETERANS CEMETERY UPDATE

CEMETERY DIRECTOR, Zach Rodriguez

July was another busy month for the cemetery. Fourth of July celebrations started the month off, followed by the American Legion State Conference and the National Cemetery Administration's National Training Conference. Also attended during the month was the Idaho Funeral Services Association State Conference. Many resources were shared during these trips and many additional resources are being added to insure we offer the best assistance to our great veterans.

The month of August began with the completion of a very helpful Eagle Scout Project placing 'Soil Aid' around all of our 200+ trees. We were also very saddened and privileged to serve a dear friend and his family. Major Ed W. Freeman (U.S. Army Retired), the Idaho State Veterans Cemetery's first Medal of Honor recipient, was laid to rest. Major Freeman was initially in the U.S. Navy during World War II and in the U.S. Army during Korea and Vietnam. When Ed attempted to enter flight school, he had a problem with the height restriction which was 6'2". Because Ed stood at 6'4", he was given the nickname "Too Tall." Major Freeman received the Medal of Honor for heroic actions during Vietnam, where he and his commander volunteered to deliver supplies and pick up the wounded because medical evacuation helicopters were ordered not to enter the landing zone due to heavy enemy fire. Major Freeman and his commander's heroic actions were depicted by the well known Mel Gibson movie, We Were Soldiers.

The month of September brought with it some cooler weather and the signal that colder months are ahead. A second Eagle Scout project was completed at the beginning of the month that will allow us to display several more flags on our Avenue of Flags. The crew also began making preparations for the coming winter months, winterizing equipment and preparing to shut down irrigation for the winter. The crew at the cemetery is also preparing for the upcoming holidays.

As always, if you have never visited the Idaho State Veterans Cemetery, or have not visited for a while, take the time to come tour the grounds before the cold weather hits. It is beautiful here.

YOU CAN NOW GET THE BULLETIN VIA EMAIL

In our continual effort to reduce costs and lessen our "ecological footprint," the Office of Veterans Advocacy is again asking for your help. In order to reduce printing and mailing costs, as well as the amount of paper used, we are asking you to volunteer to receive the bulletin via email.

The bulletin will arrive in your in-box every quarter as a Word document, which will allow you to forward or print and disseminate as many copies as you like. In addition to receiving the quarterly bulletin, you will also receive our annual Veterans Resource Directory via email.

If you can help us with our goal of reducing costs and the saving paper, please email Jennel Binsky at jennel.binsky@veterans.idaho.gov. Thanks for your help with this most worthwhile endeavor! And don't forget you can always view and print the Bulletin and Resource Directory by visiting our website at www.veterans.idaho.gov.

WHEELERS FOR THE WOUNDED EVENT IN BOISE

The Wheelers for the Wounded is a program to provide a weekend of off-roading for our country's wounded military members. It is an opportunity to experience a much deserved adventure of fun and excitement as these veterans traverse the rugged Idaho desert in some of the most capable vehicles built.

This event will occur July 10, 2009, in the greater Boise area. Wounded servicemen and women will get to experience the beautiful country they unselfishly gave up so much for. Members of the Hillbilly Rock Krew will host the event and accompany them on the trails. After the run, veterans will be treated to a terrific meal, and an enjoyable time will be had by all involved!

All wounded servicemen and women interested in attending the event, are asked to contact rcksqrl@hillbillyrockkrew.com, so they can sign you up and accommodate any special needs you have. As the event is further arranged, more information will be posted on their website, hillbillyrockkrew.com.

The Hillbilly Rock Krew will be hosting many different charity events leading up to the event on July 9th, so there will be NO fees for the wounded veterans and their immediate family members for the event, food, and festivities.

GUIDANCE ISSUED FOR EXPANDED CRSC PROGRAM

By Jim Tice, Army Times

The Defense Department has issued implementing guidance for the newly expanded categories of the Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC) program. The changes extend benefits to select categories of disabled retirees of the active and reserve components who had fewer than 20 years of service.

Until Congress passed authorizing legislation earlier this year, benefits under the potential \$22 billion entitlements program were restricted to disabled retirees with at least 20 years of service. The expanded CRSC program includes Chapter 61 medically retired service members, retirees on the Temporary Disabled Retirement List, and disabled retirees who left service with fewer than 20 years of service under the Temporary Early Retirement Act. The new criteria do not include reserve soldiers who retired for a disability incurred outside the line of duty. The new categories expand the potential eligible population for CRSC by more than 113,000 claimants, including 55,000 Chapter 61 and 58,000 TERA retirees. Lt. Col. Christopher Drinkard, Deputy Director of the Army component of the CRSC program, said that within that new population, a percentage of people will have combat-related disabilities that qualify them for benefits.

The Defense Department issued implementing instructions for the new program in June, and the Army is now accepting applications from the new categories of people. Since implementation of the basic CRSC program five years ago, the services have disbursed \$2.88 billion in payments, with \$1.6 billion going to former soldiers. During June alone, the Army paid \$35.6 million to claimants, according to data provided by Drinkard's office. The new eligibility criteria apply to disabled retirees "from any era," Drinkard said. Payments for applicants in the expanded categories will be retroactive to January 1, 2008. As under the previous version of the program, there are four categories of "combat-related" disabilities that qualify a person for CRSC compensation, according to Drinkard: injury received from a military weapon or vehicle while performing military duties, hazardous service, conditions that simulate war such as training, and armed conflict. People who have injured themselves in training or combat, are drawing military retired pay, and who have a Department of Veteran Affairs rating can qualify if they can demonstrate with documentation how they were injured.

Drinkard said people who believe they may be eligible for compensation should access the Army's CRSC web site, www.crsc.army.mil, for information. People may email questions or requests for information to crsc.info@us.army.mil. Those who do not have computer access or who want to talk to a CRSC specialist, should call toll-free (866) 281-3254.

HOW LONG DOES THE VA TAKE?

As of September 1, 2008, the VA Regional Office in Boise reports the following figures. The average time to process disability claims is:

	Boise	Nation
Original claims (7 issues or less):	148 days	204 days
Original claims (8 issues or more):	153 days	186 days
Reopened and claims for increase:	120 days	196 days
Service connected death claims:	95 days	122 days

The Boise VA Regional Office had 281 Global War on Terror (GWOT) claims pending. On average, these claims had been pending 77 days, compared to a national average of 96 days. They have identified 24 severely injured GWOT veterans in Idaho. Claims from three of them are still active and have been pending an average of 46 days. Boise has 1,406 disability claims pending. Of those, 80 (5.7%) have been pending more than six months, and two (0.1%) have been pending more than one year.

The average time on hold for calls coming in to the Boise VA Regional Office in August was less than three minutes, with 1,914 calls taken. The worst time to call? The first three days of the month and any Monday. They also conducted 440 personal interviews with an average wait time of less than four minutes. The worst time to visit? The first three days of the month and any Monday.

In August, it took 14 days from receipt of an application for rehabilitation, to the date the VA notified the veteran of the decision on eligibility.

In August, the VA issued benefits amounting to \$14,077,503 to Idaho's veterans, and \$1,795,863 to widows, orphans, and dependent parents of Idaho's veterans. That totals over \$190 million per year to support Idaho's disabled veterans, their dependents, and their survivors.

AMERICA'S HEROES AT WORK

America's Heroes at Work, www.americaheroesatwork.gov, is a U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) program that focuses on the employment challenges of returning service members living with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and/or Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The program equips employers and the workforce development system with the tools they need to help those affected by TBI and/or PTSD succeed in the workplace--particularly service members returning from Iraq and Afghanistan.

Due to advances in military medicine and protective equipment, increased numbers of service members are surviving the injuries they sustain on the battlefield. However, the changing combat landscape has caused a sharp increase in TBI and PTSD, which are increasingly recognized as key injuries of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Hundreds of thousands of brave men and women will be coping with the challenges of TBI and PTSD as they reenter civilian life, today and for many years to come.

Although their injuries may not be visible, service members with TBI or PTSD may face difficulties--especially with respect to employment. These individuals may suffer from headaches, vertigo, balance problems, anxiety, and sleep disturbance, among other symptoms. They also may have cognitive symptoms including short-term memory deficits, poor concentration and decision-making difficulties. All of these can interfere with everyday activities, inside and outside of the workplace.

For wounded and injured veterans, employment can play a significant role in the road to recovery. So to help our returning service members succeed in the workplace, America's Heroes at Work is engaging in a targeted education campaign designed to increase awareness of TBI and PTSD issues among the workforce system, and to educate employers on accommodations they can make for these employees to help ensure workplace success.

The program will offer a variety of educational resources devoted to improving employment-related outcomes for returning service members with TBI and/or PTSD. Materials will include fact sheets, web-based training tools, educational presentations and more--all designed for employers, workforce development professionals, service branches, key military support systems, veterans' service organizations and One-Stop Career Centers.

Many federal government agencies and non-profit organizations are addressing important aspects of TBI and PTSD. America's Heroes at Work is a federal initiative created solely to provide employment support for returning service members with these specific conditions. The program is managed jointly by the DOL's Office of Disability Employment Policy and the Veterans' Employment and Training Service in collaboration with other federal agencies engaged in TBI and PTSD programs, including the Departments of Defense, Veterans Affairs, Health and Human Services, Education, the National Institutes of Health and others.

LIONESS, A FILM, FOLLOWS FIVE FEMALE COMBAT VETERANS

Free Preview Screenings and Speakers

They went to Iraq as cooks, clerks, and mechanics and returned a year later as part of America's first generation of female combat veterans. Despite an official government policy that states that women are not supposed to partake in direct ground combat, the five women featured in this film most certainly did. LIONESS, the provocative and powerful documentary from Meg McLagan and Daria Sommers tells the story of five women who served together for a year in Iraq.

The film tells the Lioness story through the narratives of five key soldiers. Their personal stories, variety in backgrounds, and post-Iraq challenges as wives, mothers, and daughters collectively take us through the complex issues that female participation in combat provokes. LIONESS is the first film to bridge the gap between the perception and the reality of the essential role women are playing in Iraq, capturing an historical turning point for American society.

LIONESS is the second movie of the 2008-2009 Season of Community Cinema. Community Cinema offers monthly sneak previews of documentaries from the Emmy Award-winning PBS series Independent Lens. Following each screening special guest speakers and audience discussion explore topics raised in the film and bring a local perspective to important social issues. Community Cinema is a partnership of the, Idaho Public Television, the Boise State University Cultural Center, Idaho State University and the Independent Television Service (ITVS). LIONESS will air on Idaho Public Television November 11th.

There will be free preview screenings and speakers the following dates and times:

- ✓ Mountain Home on Monday, October 20th, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. at the American Legion Hall at 515 East 2nd South
- ✓ Boise on Tuesday, October 21st, 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. at the BSU Student Union, Farnsworth Room
- ✓ Pocatello on Tuesday, October 21st, 5:15 to 6:45 p.m. at the ISU Pond Student Union, Bengal Theater
- ✓ Nampa on Saturday, October 25th, 10:30 a.m. to noon at the BSU West, Room 102E, (BSU West is located 1 mile north of Garrity Freeway Exit)

MORE DOCUMENTATION NECESSARY TO REPLACE OR RENEW MILITARY ID CARDS

Homeland Security Directive 12 now requires retirees and family members seeking to renew or replace a military identification cards to provide two types of ID. Retirees and family members needing identification cards must have two of the following types of current identification -- one of which must include a photo:

- ✓ Driver's license or ID issued by a state or outlying U.S. commonwealth or possession.
- ✓ ID card issued by federal, state or local government agencies or entities.
- ✓ School ID card with a photograph
- ✓ Voter's registration card
- ✓ U.S. military ID card
- ✓ U.S. passport
- ✓ Certificate of U.S. citizenship
- ✓ Certificate of naturalization
- ✓ For persons younger than 18, who are unable to present a document previously listed, they may bring the following
- ✓ School record or report card
- ✓ Clinic, doctor or hospital record
- ✓ Day-care or nursery school record

The listing above is not all inclusive. A list of acceptable documents can be found at www.uscis.gov/files/form/I-9.pdf, on page 4.

Before visiting a military ID card issuing facility, people may want to call first to determine what specific documents may be required, and to verify the process to renew or replace an ID card. For contact information and the location of the nearest ID card issuing facility, visit www.dmdc.osd.mil/rsl/owa/home. On this website, people can search by city, state, or ZIP code.

VA LOANS REMAIN A STRONG OPTION FOR VETERANS

News Release, September 19, 2008

More servicemembers and veterans are using their Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) home loan guaranty benefit, as the VA's loan program remains a strong option in today's housing market. The VA is experiencing a significant increase in home loan volume, with more than 162,000 home loan guaranties provided this year, an increase of more than 31% over the same period last year. "VA attributes this increase to the favorable terms traditionally offered with VA loans and the elimination of many no-downpayment products in the conventional mortgage market," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake.

No-downpayment loans are increasingly difficult to obtain with conventional financing. Under recently enacted legislation, the VA now uses a locality-based approach in determining ceilings on its no-downpayment home loans. The VA no-downpayment loans are available for as much as \$729,000. Larger VA loans may be obtained with relatively small down payments. Not only is the VA program one of the few remaining no-downpayment programs in the market today, but lenders and veterans using the program are finding that it provides a timely and user-friendly product.

Focus in recent years on improvements in information technology has helped streamline the loan process and has made the program more accessible. Veterans no longer need to obtain a VA Certificate of Eligibility prior to contacting a lender. Lenders can access the program's web portal to use VA's online Automated Certificate of Eligibility (ACE) system and obtain the certificate for the veteran. Many times, lenders can receive the certificate within seconds. VA lenders have the authority to process and approve veterans' loan applications. Lenders can order appraisals online, review and determine the appraised value of the property themselves, electronically submit the information VA needs to process a loan guaranty, and then receive the guaranty electronically within 24 hours.

The VA is also revolutionizing its loan servicing activity through implementation of a new web-enabled and rules-based "smart" system called VALERI (VA Loan Electronic Reporting Interface). Standardized servicing criteria on par or ahead of industry norms and instant access to acquisition and claim payment status make it easier for servicers to work and communicate with the VA. It also allows servicers to help veterans who are experiencing financial difficulty avoid foreclosure.

VA-guaranteed home loans are made to eligible veterans, servicemembers, and surviving spouses through private mortgage lenders throughout the United States. Since 1944, when home loan guaranties were first offered with the original GI Bill, the VA has guaranteed more than 18 million home loans worth over \$965 billion. Last year, about 135,000 veterans, servicemembers, and surviving spouses received loans valued at nearly \$24 billion.

More than 90% of VA loans were made without any down payment. To obtain more information about the VA Loan Guaranty Program, veterans can call VA at 1-877-827-3702. Information can also be obtained at www.homeloans.va.gov.

SUICIDE PREVENTION IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS

Suicide Prevention Is Everyone's Business – that's the message the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is sending to veterans, their family members and friends, and the general public as part of its nationwide campaign to prevent suicides among veterans.

The VA has launched a series of activities to increase public awareness of the warning signs of suicide. During National Suicide Prevention Awareness Week, which took place September 7-13, the VA released a nationwide Public Service Announcement featuring actor Gary Sinise, who portrayed a suicidal veteran in the movie *Forrest Gump* who was saved at the last minute. Another PSA featuring newswoman Deborah Norville, host of the television program *Inside Edition*, is being developed to target the family members of veterans.

"Preventing suicide among veterans is a top priority at VA," said Dr. Michael J. Kussman, Under Secretary for Health. "Each and every veteran suicide is a tragedy. We are committed to doing everything we can to prevent these sad events from occurring."

The VA also recently began a pilot project involving an advertising campaign in the metropolitan Washington, D.C., area. Display ads on transit buses and in metro stations are designed to make veterans and their family members aware of the VA Suicide Prevention Hotline, 1-800-273-TALK/8255, which makes trained mental health professionals available to speak with veterans in emotional crisis, or with their family members, around the clock.

More than 69,000 veterans, family members, or friends of veterans have called the Hotline since July 2007 when it began operating. Of those, more than 1,600 have been considered rescues, and have prevented possible tragedies. In addition, the VA has sponsored two previous Suicide Prevention Awareness events and placed announcements about suicide prevention and the VA Lifeline on the VA's website, www.va.gov.

The VA also is distributing brochures, wallet cards, telephone stickers, bumper magnets, key chains, and stress balls to veterans, their families, and VA employees to promote awareness of the Hotline number and to educate its employees, the community, and veterans about how to identify and help those who may be at risk. Large posters providing the Hotline number and website are displayed at all medical facilities, feature the slogan, "IT TAKES THE COURAGE AND STRENGTH OF A WARRIOR TO ASK FOR HELP."

All VA medical centers have suicide prevention coordinators. Jan Kemp, the VA's Suicide Prevention Coordinator, said that new staff at each facility will bring the number of VA staff dedicated to the suicide prevention effort to more than 400. The VA also has hired more than 3,900 new mental health employees since 2005 – bringing the total number of mental health employees to more than 17,000 mental health workers. The VA has also announced that by the end of 2009, the Department will add 61 new Vet Centers (bringing the total number of Vet Centers to 268) throughout the nation to provide more individual, group and family counseling to veterans of all wars.

The suicide prevention program includes two centers that conduct research and provide support to all locations of care. One is the Mental Health Center of Excellence in Canandaigua, NY, which focuses on developing and testing clinical and public health intervention related to suicide risk and prevention. The VA Hotline Call Center also is located in Canandaigua, and was developed in partnership with the Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. The other center for suicide research is the Mental Illness Research Education and Clinical Center in Denver, CO, which focuses on researching the clinical and neurobiological conditions that can lead to increased suicide risk.

The VA's efforts to identify veterans who may be at risk for suicide have also increased. All new patients at VA centers are screened to determine if they are at risk for suicide.

To raise family and community awareness of the warning signs of suicide, the VA suggests that if a love one is exhibiting any of the following behaviors, he or she should seek help immediately:

- Talking about wanting to hurt or kill oneself
- Trying to get pills, guns, or other ways to harm oneself
- Talking or writing about death, dying or suicide
- Hopelessness
- Rage, uncontrolled anger, seeking revenge
- Acting in a reckless or risky way
- Feeling trapped, like there is no way out
- Saying or feeling there's no reason for living.

Additional information is available at the VA's website, www.mentalhealth.va.gov.

VFW THANKS AIRLINES FOR DROPPING MILITARY LUGGAGE FEES

News Release, August 28, 2008

The new national commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. is saying “thank you” to the American airline industry for allowing military personnel traveling on orders to now check a third piece of luggage without paying an additional fee. “I am extremely grateful to the airlines for agreeing with the VFW that dropping the fee was the right decision to make for our troops,” said Glen Gardner, a Vietnam veteran from Round Rock, Texas, just north of Austin. Gardner was elected to lead the nation’s largest organization of combat veterans on August 21st at the VFW’s 109th national convention in Orlando, Florida.

The baggage fee issue surfaced last month in a Texas newspaper article about a young soldier being charged \$100 for a third piece of checked luggage. The soldier was headed for additional training before deploying to Iraq.

All major U.S. carriers were allowing military to check two bags for free, but the \$100 industry norm for the third checked bag was hitting young troops directly in their wallets, despite some assurances from the Defense Department that the fee might be reimbursable at a later date. The VFW weighed in by asking the Air Transport Association to work with its member airlines to exempt military personnel traveling on orders from paying baggage fees on a third piece of checked luggage. “A \$100 is a huge out-of-pocket expense to someone who doesn’t earn very much,” said Gardner, “and that’s why this luggage fee waiver is so important. Our troops can now properly focus on their mission instead of remembering to complete a travel voucher in a war zone.”

In a letter of appreciation sent August 27th to ATA president James C. May, the VFW national commander expressed his thanks to the association for facilitating the fee waiver with its member airlines. “Waiving the third checked bag fee was a decision that needed to be made,” wrote Gardner. “The VFW is very appreciative of ATA’s understanding of our call to action, and very grateful for the subsequent actions taken by your member airlines. U.S. air carriers have always been huge supporters of our troops; their decisions to waive the third checked bag fee now amplifies that strong support.”

U.S. ARMY WOMEN’S FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

The U.S. Army Women’s Foundation is the premier center for educational excellence, the national network for today’s Army women, and a dynamic advocate for telling the history of Army women. The U.S. Army Women’s Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization headquartered in Fort Lee, VA. The mission of the Foundation is to recognize and honor the service of women in the Army and to support the Army Women’s Museum at Fort Lee.

The Foundation Legacy Scholarship program recognizes the importance of education and helping recipients to achieve their educational goals. The Legacy Scholarship program offers financial support to Army women and their lineal descendants. Scholarships are based on merit, academic potential, community service, and need.

To be eligible, the application must be a woman who served or is serving honorably in the U.S. Army, U.S. Army Reserve, or the Army National Guard; or be the child of a woman who served honorably in the U.S. Army. The applicant must also be enrolled at an accredited college or university, have academic credits for junior or senior standing, and have a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or better.

Selection of the Legacy Scholarship recipient(s) will be made by a Scholarship Committee appointed by the Board of Directors of the U.S. Army Women’s Foundation. These funds may be used to assist with tuition, fees, and documented room and board. The funds will be sent to the awardee pending documentation of these legitimate expenses and must be used in the academic year awarded. These funds may not be used for prior academic expenses.

The application must be accompanied by a short essay (2 pages or less, typed, double-spaced) highlighting why the recipient should be considered for this scholarship and address future plans as related to the program of study. This essay should also include pertinent information in assessing other areas such as community service, activities and work experience. A transcript from their college or university must accompany the application. The application must also be accompanied by two references with titles and contact information. One instructor in the applicant’s program of study is preferred.

Application materials, application form, essay, transcript, recommendations, proof of matriculation at designated accredited academic institution, as well as commander’s verification of active duty or documentation (Department of Defense Form DD-214) of the sponsor or woman’s service must be postmarked by February 1, 2009. Applications and all materials must be submitted by the deadline for consideration and selection. All materials should be sent directly to the USAWF Scholarship Committee, P.O. Box 5030, Fort Lee, VA 23801.

For further information or for an application, just visit the U.S. Army Women’s Foundation website at www.awfdn.org. Any questions can be emailed to info@awfdn.org.

NEW NATIONAL POLL SHOWS LARGE MAJORITY SUPPORTS FUNDING REFORM

News Release, September 18, 2008

Nine of the nation's largest veterans service organizations, representing a combined 8 million members, praised Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Daniel Akaka (D-Hawaii), House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Bob Filner (D-Calif.), and a group of bipartisan cosponsors for introducing legislation to reform the budget process to assure sufficient, timely, and predictable funding for veterans' health care programs.

The Partnership for Veterans Health Care Budget Reform, www.fundingforvets.org, which worked closely with the bill sponsors in drafting the legislation, is comprised of The American Legion, AMVETS, Blinded Veterans Association (BVA), Disabled American Veterans (DAV), Jewish War Veterans (JWV), Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH), Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA), Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), and Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA).

"For almost two decades, veterans health care funding has either been insufficient or late, and usually it is both," said PVA President Randy Pleva, speaking on behalf of the Partnership. "While funding bills have increased in recent years, especially the last two years, they are still consistently late. We must reform the funding system if we are to assure comprehensive and timely health care services for current and future generations of veterans," he said.

American Legion National Commander David K. Rehbein, also speaking for the Partnership, praised the bill's bipartisan cosponsors, Senators Olympia Snowe (R-ME), Russ Feingold (D-WI), and Mary Landrieu (D-LA), and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and Congressmen Walter Jones (R-NC), Michael Michaud (D-ME), and Phil Hare (D-IL). "We applaud all of the bill's sponsors who have taken the lead in Congress to create a lasting legacy for our veterans by reforming the budget process to ensure that veterans health care funding is sufficient, timely and predictable," Rehbein said.

The new legislation, called the "Veterans Health Care Budget Reform Act," would authorize advance appropriations for Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care programs one year in advance of the start of the fiscal year, an idea favored by more than 80 percent of American voters, according to a survey released today by the Disabled American Veterans. The Veterans Health Care Budget Reform Act would also require the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to audit the VA's budget forecasting model and report to Congress and the public on the integrity and accuracy of the model. With these estimates in hand, Congress would be greatly enhanced in their ability to develop and enact sufficient funding levels for VA health care.

"While funding levels have increased in recent years, particularly over the past two years, Congress has failed to approve a new VA appropriation bill on time for 19 of the past 21 years," said DAV Commander Ray Dempsey. "Our polling results show that the American people overwhelmingly support a proposal to have Congress approve VA's health care funding one year in advance to once and for all end these delays," Commander Dempsey said.

The poll released by DAV, which was conducted by Belden Russonello & Stewart, found that Americans believe veterans health care funding is at the top of our national priorities; strongly believe that the government is not doing enough to support veterans; and overwhelming favor requiring Congress to determine the budget for veterans' health care one year in advance to prevent delays. The nationally representative telephone survey of 827 adults was conducted between August 20 and 24, 2008, and has a margin of error of $\pm 3.4\%$. Full details of the survey are available at dav.org/voters/documents/veteran_survey_memo.pdf.

VA OPENING RURAL HEALTH RESOURCE CENTERS

News Release, August 18, 2008

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) opened three Veterans Rural Health Resource Centers on October 1st to better understand rural health issues for veterans and develop special practices and products to implement across the country. "For our veterans living in rural areas, the nearest medical center can be miles away," said VA Secretary Dr. James B. Peake. "VA's commitment is to provide the best quality care to veterans regardless of their address. These centers are a major step toward ensuring that commitment is met."

The centers will serve as satellite offices for the VA's Office of Rural Health. The eastern center will be located in Vermont at the White River Junction VA Medical Center, the central region in Iowa at the Iowa City VA Medical Center, and the western region at the Salt Lake City VA Medical Center. Each resource center will be staffed with administrative, clinical and research staff who will identify disparities in health care for rural veterans and formulate practices or programs to enhance the delivery of care.

"VA has always been committed to providing quality care to rural veterans," said Dr. Michael J. Kussman, the VA's under secretary for health. "These centers will allow us to better identify and meet the unique needs of our rural veterans as their population continues to grow."

SEEKING MENTAL HEALTH HELP SHOWS COURAGE, OFFICIALS SAY

By Christie Vanover, Special Armed Forces Press Service

The Army is a team that embraces the Warrior Ethos by never accepting defeat and never quitting. But what happens when someone is pressured by the daily grind, life at home or financial burden? What happens when they believe admitting their problems contradicts the ethos by which they live?

“It’s hard for [people] to ask for help,” said Chris Staker, U.S. Army Garrison Benelux health promotion coordinator. “Even though we try hard, we haven’t erased the stigma of seeking help.” Because of this and other concerns felt throughout the service, Lt. Gen. Michael D. Rochelle, Army deputy chief of staff for personnel, is stressing that seeking help is not a sign of weakness; it is a sign of courage and strength.

Indeed, the service’s 2008 Suicide Prevention Program is aimed at communicating to soldiers that in order to be “Army Strong,” they need the resiliency and the ability to be flexible to the inherent stresses in military life. The program acknowledges that not everyone who enters the military has those skills. Just like learning to fire an M-16 rifle for the first time, developing positive life-coping skills is something that the Army is eager to help soldiers learn. “We teach soldiers to make sure their equipment is always 100 percent. We need to teach them to keep themselves at 100 percent,” Staker said. “They are the Army’s biggest investment. Mental health is just as important as passing a physical fitness test or qualifying at the [weapons] range.”

According to Army statistics, more than 580 soldiers have been lost to suicide since the beginning of the global war on terror – the equivalent to an entire infantry battalion task force. “Suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem,” Staker said. “A lot of times, soldiers just need to be able to get over the hump.”

The 2006 Army Suicide Event Report revealed that the majority of suicides are triggered by problems with personal relationships or jobs. The Army offers many free, confidential programs to help soldiers, family members and civilians in these areas. Behavioral health task forces work to block these channels early while they’re still manageable, Staker noted. Each task force targets specific local needs and develops prevention tools and support based on those needs, he added. From military family life consultants to behavioral health specialists to chaplains – along with garrison organizations such as Social Work Services, Soldier and Family Assistance Centers and Army Community Services – the availability of help is endless and easily accessible.

Those who aren’t sure whether they need help can visit www.militaryonesource.com. The home page includes a link to a variety of self-assessment tools aimed at evaluating one’s stress level and resiliency. Military OneSource also has counselors available 24 hours per day.

The Army acknowledges that some soldiers don’t have the strength to seek help on their own – which is where the Warrior Ethos comes in. “Even if you’re not the one in need, you know your buddy best,” Staker said. “Send them in for [care].”

VA ANNOUNCES ON-LINE CLAIMS APPLICATIONS

News Release, July 16, 2008

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced that on-line applications are now accepted from veterans, survivors, and other claimants filing initial applications for disability compensation, pension, education, and vocational rehabilitation and employment benefits without the additional requirement to submit a signed paper copy of the application.

Effective immediately, the VA will now process applications received through its on-line application website (VONAPP) without the claimant’s signature. The electronic application will be sufficient authentication of the claimant’s application for benefits. Normal development procedures and rules of evidence will still apply to all VONAPP applications.

VONAPP, www.va.gov/onlineapps.htm, is a web-based system that benefits both internal and external users. Veterans, survivors, and other claimants seeking compensation, pension, education, or vocational rehabilitation benefits can apply electronically without the constraints of location, postage cost, and time delays in mail delivery. VONAPP reduces the number of incomplete applications received by the VA, decreasing the need for additional development by VA claims processors. The on-line application also provides a link to apply for VA health care benefits and much more.

Over 3.7 million veterans and beneficiaries receive compensation and pension benefits from the VA and approximately 523,000 students receive education benefits. Approximately 90,000 disabled veterans participate in the VA’s Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment program. For more information about VA benefits, go to VA’s website at www.va.gov or call our toll-free number at (800) 827-1000.

VA CLARIFIES VOTER REGISTRATION REGULATIONS

News Release, September 8, 2008

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced it has clarified its policy on assisting veterans' voter registration activities, with particular focus on inpatients and residents of VA community living centers and domiciliaries, and patients with limited access to community voter registration resources.

The Department will welcome state and local election officials and non-partisan groups to its hospitals and outpatient clinics to assist VA officials in registering voters at VA facilities. Such assistance, however, must be coordinated by those facilities in order to avoid disruptions to patient care. "VA has always been committed to helping veterans exercise their constitutional right to vote, which they defended for all Americans while serving their nation," said Dr. James B. Peake, Secretary of Veterans Affairs. "We've now established a uniform approach to helping those of our patients who need assistance to register and to vote."

The policy requires that information about the right of VA patients to register and vote, and other patients' rights, be posted in every VA hospital, and that all VA patients be provided a copy of these rights when they are admitted to a VA facility. Every hospital is now also required to publish a written policy on voter assistance, allowing patients to leave the hospital to register and vote, subject to the opinions of their health care providers. Patients unable to leave the facility must be assisted to register and to vote by absentee ballot.

In their written policies, VA hospitals are required to establish the criteria they will use to evaluate requests from outside agencies to register voters, and to determine where, when, and how such registration activities will be conducted. They will also develop procedures to coordinate offers of assistance from state and local governments and from non-partisan organizations, and how to work with the VA's Regional Counsel offices to determine whether or not groups offering registration help are non-partisan, as required by law.

Voluntary Service Program Managers at each of VA's 153 hospitals will be responsible for implementing the new policy, and for providing timely and accurate voting information to veterans cared for at their facilities. They will also obtain and maintain materials that are needed to assist veterans with voter registration requirements.

VA ANNOUNCES CHANGES TO THE DISABILITY RATING SCHEDULE FOR TBI AND BURN SCARS

News Release, September 23, 2008

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced changes in the way they will evaluate traumatic brain injuries (TBI) and burn scars for purposes of determining the appropriate level of compensation veterans receive for these injuries. "These important regulatory changes will allow VA decision makers to better assess the consequences of these injuries and ensure veterans are properly compensated for their residual effects," stated Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake.

VA has revised the Disability Rating Schedule in light of current scientific and medical knowledge in order to provide VA employees with more detailed and up-to-date criteria for evaluating and compensating veterans with these injuries.

Two groups of veterans may be affected by these changes. The first group includes veterans who will be awarded disability compensation for TBI and burn injuries in the future. The second group includes veterans already receiving compensation for these injuries whose disabilities are reevaluated under the new criteria.

The effects of blast injuries resulting from roadside explosions of improvised explosive devices have been common sources of injury in the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan and appear to be somewhat different from the effects of trauma seen from other sources of injury. As of September 2008, there are more than 22,000 veterans being compensated for TBI, of whom more than 5,800 are veterans of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Traumatic brain injuries result in immediate effects such as loss or alteration of consciousness, amnesia, and sometimes neurological impairments. These abnormalities may all be transient, but more prolonged or even permanent problems with a wide range of impairment in such areas as physical, mental, and emotional/behavioral functioning may occur. More than 90% of combat-related TBIs are closed head injuries, with most servicemembers sustaining a mild TBI or concussion. Difficulties after TBI may include headache, sleep difficulties, decreased memory and attention, slower thinking, irritability, and depression.

To view the entire regulation published in the Federal Register, go to www.federalregister.gov/OFRUpload/OFRData/2008-22083_PI.pdf. For more information about VA disability compensation, go to www.va.gov or call (800) 827-1000. If you live in Idaho, you may also contact the Office of Veterans Advocacy at (208) 334-1245.

VA PROVIDES TRAINING IN STATE-OF-THE-ART PSYCHOTHERAPIES TO TREAT PTSD

News Release, July 17, 2008

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is providing national training in state-of-the-art psychotherapies to enable its mental health clinicians to provide the most effective and proven treatments available to help veterans overcome Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

By expanding its training programs, the VA will enable more veterans than ever to receive the newest evidence-based psychological treatments, such as Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT) and Prolonged Exposure (PE) Therapy, two psychotherapies developed specifically for PTSD. Evidence-based psychotherapies are those that have been scientifically evaluated and shown in randomized clinical trials to be more effective than other treatments or no treatment. The VA is the first national health care system to undertake a broad national initiative to use evidence-based psychotherapies for PTSD.

In 2007, the VA began a national initiative to train VA mental health clinicians on how to use Cognitive Processing Therapy through an intensive interactive training program involving attendance at a workshop, incorporating role playing and ongoing follow-up in which a consultant works directly with the therapist in applying the therapy with their patients. More than 1,100 mental health professionals have received this training to date. The VA also began similar training earlier this year to enable clinicians to utilize Prolonged Exposure Therapy. About 150 clinicians have been trained so far, and training will continue over the next few years.

“VA is strongly committed to making evidence-based psychological treatments available to all veterans,” said Dr. Bradley Karlin, the VA’s Director of Psychotherapy Program. “This intensive training will enable VA to become even more effective in treating patients with PTSD and other mental illnesses.” According to Dr. Karlin, recent reviews and reports, including a report by the Institute of Medicine, have confirmed that psychotherapies such as Cognitive Processing Therapy and Prolonged Exposure Therapy are effective for PTSD and at least, if not more, effective than medication in treating PTSD.

CPT is a form of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) developed for PTSD. This type of therapy links a person’s psychological well being with his or her thoughts and beliefs. Individuals with PTSD, depression, or other mental health problems often engage in extreme, negative ways of thinking or interpreting situations that affects their mood and behaviors. “In Cognitive Processing Therapy, the therapist helps the patient confront the symptoms of PTSD and the thoughts and behaviors that contribute to and maintain them,” Dr. Karlin said. “During the therapy, the patient comes to develop more realistic and balanced evaluations of the trauma and of oneself following the trauma.”

For example, a veteran who may suffer from PTSD after firing on a fast approaching car at a checkpoint may harbor the belief that killing that person was their fault and, as a result, they may experience significant guilt. During therapy, the patient may learn to come to a more realistic evaluation of the situation and replace the original thought with the idea that firing their weapon was done as a last resort, thus leading to reduced guilt.

Exposure therapy is based on the idea that people learn to fear the thoughts, feelings and situations that remind them of a traumatic event. This avoidance usually strengthens the patient’s fear. By talking repeatedly with the therapist and overcoming avoidance of such reminders and their internal emotional experiences, patients can change the feelings they have related to the trauma.

In Prolonged Exposure Therapy, the patient learns relaxation techniques to help them through imagined exposure exercises in which he or she recalls memories of the traumatic experience that were previously avoided. Following repeated imagined exposure, the patient exposes himself or herself to situations that remind them of the traumatic event, such as crowded places or particular locations or surroundings that maintain and exacerbate the trauma-related symptoms.

“We are fortunate today to have treatments for PTSD that are proven to work, and VA is actively working to bring these state-of-the-art treatments from the laboratory to the therapy room,” Dr. Karlin said. “The intensive training VA is providing to clinicians nationwide is revolutionary and will transform the way mental health care is delivered to veterans. The end result will be better treatment for our nation’s heroes who have PTSD.”

THE HISTORY OF VETERANS DAY

Official recognition of the end of the first modern global conflict – World War I – was made in a concurrent resolution (44 Stat. 1982) enacted by Congress on June 4, 1926, with these words:

WHEREAS the 11th of November 1918, marked the cessation of the most destructive, sanguinary, and far reaching war in human annals and the resumption by the people of the United States of peaceful relations with other nations, which we hope may never again be severed, and

WHEREAS it is fitting that the recurring anniversary of this date should be commemorated with thanksgiving and prayer and exercises designed to perpetuate peace through good will and mutual understanding between nations; and

WHEREAS the legislatures of twenty-seven of our States have already declared November 11 to be a legal holiday: Therefore be it Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That the President of the United States is requested to issue a proclamation calling upon the officials to display the flag of the United States on all Government buildings on November 11 and inviting the people of the United States to observe the day in schools and churches, or other suitable places, with appropriate ceremonies of friendly relations with all other peoples.

An Act (52 Stat. 351; 5 U. S. Code, Sec. 87a) approved May 13, 1938, and the 11th of November in each year a legal holiday – a day to be dedicated to the cause of world peace and to be hereafter celebrated and known as "Armistice Day. "

Armistice Day was primarily a day set aside to honor veterans of World War I, but in 1954, after World War II had required the greatest mobilization of soldiers, sailors, marines and airmen in the Nation's history; after American forces had fought aggression in Korea, the 83rd Congress, at the urging of the veterans service organizations, amended the Act of 1938 by striking out the word "Armistice" and inserting in lieu thereof the word "Veterans. " With the approval of this legislation (Public Law 380) on June 1, 1954, November 11th became a day to honor American veterans of all wars.

Later that same year, on October 8th, President Dwight D. Eisenhower issued the first "Veterans Day Proclamation " which stated:

"In order to insure proper and widespread observance of this anniversary, all veterans, all veterans' organizations, and the entire citizenry will wish to join hands in the common purpose. Toward this end, I am designating the Administrator of Veterans' Affairs as Chairman of a Veterans Day National Committee, which shall include such other persons as the Chairman may select, and which will coordinate at the national level necessary planning for the observance. I am also requesting the heads of all departments and agencies of the Executive branch of the Government to assist the National Committee in every way possible."

A letter from the President to the Honorable Harvey V. Higley, Administrator of Veterans' Affairs, was sent on the same date designating him to serve as Chairman. In 1958, the White House advised the VA's General Counsel that there was no need for another letter of appointment for each new Administrator, as the original proclamation in 1954 established the Committee with the Administrator of Veterans' Affairs as Chairman.

The Uniforms Holiday Bill (Public Law 90-363 (82 Stat. 250)) was signed on June 28, 1968, and was intended to insure three-day weekends for Federal employees by celebrating four national holidays on Mondays – Washington's Birthday, Memorial Day, Veterans Day, and Columbus Day. It was thought that these extended weekends would encourage travel, recreational and cultural activities and stimulate greater industrial and commercial production. Many states did not agree with this decision and continued to celebrate the holidays on their original dates. The first Veterans Day under the new law was observed with much confusion on October 25, 1971.

It was quite apparent that the commemoration of this day was a matter of historic and patriotic significance to a great number of our citizens, and so on September 20th, 1975, President Gerald R. Ford signed Public Law 94-97 (89 Stat. 479), which returned the annual observance of Veterans Day to its original date of November 11, beginning in 1978. This action supported the express will of the overwhelming majority of the State legislatures, all major service organizations and the American people.

The restoration of the observance of Veterans Day to November 11 not only preserves the historical significance of the date, but helps focus attention on the important purpose of Veterans Day: a celebration to honor America's veterans for their patriotism, love of country, and willingness to serve and sacrifice for the common good.

For P. M. Release October 8, 1954, THE WHITE HOUSE OFFICE. In connection with the signing of the proclamation on Veterans Day, the President today sent the following letter to the Honorable Harvey V. Higley, Administrator of Veterans' Affairs:

Dear Mr. Higley:

I have today signed a proclamation calling upon all of our citizens to observe Thursday, November 11, 1954 as Veterans Day. It is my earnest hope that all veterans, their organizations, and the entire citizenry will join hands to insure proper and widespread observance of this day.

With the thought that it will be most helpful to coordinate the planning, I am suggesting the formation of a Veterans Day National Committee. In view of your great personal interest as well as your official responsibilities, I have designated you to serve as Chairman. You may include in the Committee membership such other persons as you desire to select and I am requesting the heads of all departments and agencies of the Executive branch to assist the Committee in its work in every way possible.

I have every confidence that our Nation will respond wholeheartedly in the appropriate observance of Veterans Day, 1954.

Sincerely,
DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER
Veterans Day, 1954

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA - A PROCLAMATION - 3071

Whereas it has long been our customs to commemorate November 11, the anniversary of the ending of World War I, by paying tribute to the heroes of that tragic struggle and by rededicating ourselves to the cause of peace; and

Whereas in the intervening years the United States has been involved in two other great military conflicts, which have added millions of veterans living and dead to the honor rolls of this Nation; and

Whereas the Congress passed a concurrent resolution on June 4, 1926 (44 Stat. 1982), calling for the observance of November 11 with appropriate ceremonies, and later provided in an act approved May 13, 1938 (52 Stat. 351), that the eleventh of November should be a legal holiday and should be known as Armistice Day; and

Whereas, in order to expand the significance of that commemoration and in order that a grateful Nation might pay appropriate homage to the veterans of all its wars who have contributed so much to the preservation of this Nation, the Congress, by an act approved June 1, 1954 (68 Stat. 168), changed the name of the holiday to Veterans Day:

Now, Therefore, I, Dwight D. Eisenhower, President of the United States of America, do hereby call upon all of our citizens to observe Thursday, November 11, 1954, as Veterans Day. On that day let us solemnly remember the sacrifices of all those who fought so valiantly, on the seas, in the air, and on foreign shores, to preserve our heritage of freedom, and let us reconsecrate ourselves to the task of promoting an enduring peace so that their efforts shall not have been in vain. I also direct the appropriate officials of the Government to arrange for the display of the flag of the United States on all public buildings on Veterans Day.

In order to insure proper and widespread observance of this anniversary, all veterans, all veterans' organizations, and the entire citizenry will wish to join hands in the common purpose. Toward this end, I am designating the Administrator of Veterans' Affairs as Chairman of a Veterans Day National Committee, which shall include such other persons as the Chairman may select, and which will coordinate at the national level necessary planning for the observance. I am also requesting the heads of all departments and agencies of the Executive branch of the Government to assist the National Committee in every way possible.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and cause the seal of the United States of America to be affixed.

Done at the City of Washington this eighth day of October in the Year of our Lord nineteen hundred and fifty-four, and of the Independence of the (SEAL) United States of America the one hundred and seventy-ninth.

DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER

DATES TO REMEMBER

October 13	Columbus Day
	U.S. Navy established, 1775
October 14	Star Spangled Banner adopted as National Anthem, 1931
October 19	Revolutionary War ends, 1781
November 2	Daylight-saving time ends, set clocks back one hour
November 4	Election Day – <i>See the history of Election Day below</i>
November 10	U.S. Marine Corps established, 1775
November 11	Veteran's Day
November 19	Lincoln gives Gettysburg Address, 1863
November 27	Thanksgiving Day
December 6	Army-Navy Football Game, Philadelphia, PA, 12:00 p.m. EST
December 7	Pearl Harbor bombed, 1941
December 16	Boston Tea Party, 1773
December 25	Christmas Day

CONVENTION SCHEDULES

American Legion

- Mid-Winter January 15-17, 2009, Boise, ID
- National August 21-27, 2009, Phoenix, AZ

AMVETS

- National August 7-14, 2009, New Orleans, LA

Disabled American Veterans

- State May 6-9, 2009, Boise, ID
- Mid-Winter October 24-25, 2009, Burley, ID
- National August 22-25, 2009, Denver, CO

Marine Corps League

- National August 3-7, 2009, Rochester, MN

Military Order of the Purple Heart

- National August 11-15, 2009, Rogers, AR

Retired Enlisted Association

- National September 13-19, 2009, Rapid City, SD

Veterans of Foreign Wars

- Mid-Winter January 15-17, 2009, Boise, ID
- National August 15-20, 2009, Phoenix, AZ

THE HISTORY OF ELECTION DAY

By federal law since 1792, the U.S. Congress permitted the states to conduct their presidential elections (or otherwise to choose their Electors) anytime in a 34 day period before the first Wednesday of December, which was the day set for the meeting of the Electors of the U.S. president and vice-president (the Electoral College), in their respective states. An election date in November was seen as useful because the harvest would have been completed (important in an agrarian society) and the winter storms would not yet have begun in earnest (a plus in the days before paved roads and snowplows). However, the problems borne of this arrangement were obvious and were intensified by improved communications via train and telegraph: the states that voted later could swell, diminish, or be influenced by a candidate's victories in the states that voted earlier. In close elections, the states that voted last might well determine the outcome.

A uniform date for choosing presidential Electors was instituted by the Congress in 1845. Many theories have been advanced as to why the Congress settled on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November. The actual reasons, as shown in records of Congressional debate on the bill in December 1844, were fairly prosaic. The bill initially set the national day for choosing presidential Electors on "the first Tuesday in November," in years divisible by four (1848, 1852, etc.). But it was pointed out that in some years the period between the first Tuesday in November and the first Wednesday in December (when the Electoral College met) would be more than 34 days, in violation of the existing Electoral College law. So, the bill was amended to move the national date for choosing presidential Electors forward to the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November, a date scheme already used in the state of New York.

As for the day of the week chosen, Sunday was ruled out because it was the Sabbath. An election on Monday might require travel on Sunday, and so was also ruled out. Tuesday had no problem.

DAV VAN SCHEDULES TO AND FROM VA MEDICAL CENTERS

BOISE & SURROUNDING AREA TO BOISE VAMC

For more information call Laverne Gillum at the Boise VA Medical Center (208) 422-1000 ext. 7555.

* Homedale, Marsing, and Canyon County: Call Laverne Gillum (208) 422-1000 ext. 7555.

Pickup points:

Star.....	Star Merc
Middleton.....	Downtown Shell Station
.....	Shell Station at exit 25 of I-84
Notus.....	Shell Station
Parma.....	M&W Market
Wilder.....	Shell Station
Homedale.....	Shell Station
Caldwell.....	Chevron at 10 th Avenue South & the freeway
.....	Emergency entrance of West Valley Medical Center
.....	Maverick at 10 th Avenue South & Ustick
.....	20248 Hoskins Road
Nampa.....	Karcher Mall near Ross Dress for Less
.....	Albertson's at 7 th Street & 12 th Avenue South
.....	D and B Supply on 12 th Avenue South
Melba/Bowmont.....	Chevron at Greenhurst & Southside
.....	McDonalds at exit 38 of the freeway
Kuna.....	West side of the Winco parking lot

* Weiser, Payette, Ontario, Emmett, and surrounding area: Call Grace Field (208) 452-5920.

Pickup points:

Emmett.....	Tom's Cabin Restaurant
.....	Subway near Albertson's
.....	Stinker Station
Fruitland.....	Shell Station at Palisades Corner
.....	Shell Station at the highway
Middleton (Caldwell).....	44 Quick Stop
New Plymouth.....	Lowell's Market at 5 Corners
.....	Hamilton Corners at Highways 52 & 30
Nyssa.....	Anderson Corner
.....	McDonalds at West Park Plaza
Ontario.....	McDonalds at West Park Plaza
.....	McDonalds at K-Mart
.....	Shell Station at the freeway
.....	Shell Station on Idaho
.....	The Elk's
Payette.....	Albertson's
.....	Jerry's Market on 6 th
.....	Lonnie's market
Weiser.....	Sinclair Station at Highway 95
.....	Maverick Station at Highway 95
.....	Chevron Station
.....	Pioneer Market
.....	Ridley's Market

* Twin Falls, Jerome, Lincoln, Gooding, and Elmore Counties: Call Cheryl Ringenberg (208) 733-7610.

Pickup points:

Twin Falls.....	Sheriff's Office
Filer.....	Logan's Market
Buhl.....	Oasis Stop-N-Go
Jerome.....	Ridley's Market
Gooding.....	Ridley's Market
Wendell.....	Farmhouse
Bliss.....	Ziggy's
Hammett.....	Penney's Market
Glenns Ferry.....	Shell Station
Mountain Home.....	Foothills Chevron Station

* Cassia, Minidoka, and Blaine Counties: Call Dick Dalton (208) 678-3599 or 878-2565.

Pickup points:

Burley.....	Sheriff's Office
.....	Exit 211 Wayside
.....	Exit 208 Hub 66
.....	Greenwood Store

* Southeast Oregon - Baker City, Haines, Halfway, Huntington, John Day:

Call Carl Swinyer (541)-894-2546, Robert Warner (541)523-5340 or the VFW Hall (541) 523-4988.

DAV VAN SCHEDULES TO AND FROM VA MEDICAL CENTERS

LEWISTON & SURROUNDING AREA TO SPOKANE AND WALLA WALLA VAMC'S

Wednesdays: Spokane VA Medical Center. 6:00 a.m. departure from the State Veterans Home at 821 21st Avenue.

Picks up in Genesee, Moscow, Viola, Potlatch, Tensed, Plummer, and Worley. Arrives Spokane at 9:30 a.m.

Fridays: Spokane VA Medical Center. 6:00 a.m. departure from the State Veterans Home at 821 21st Avenue.

Picks up in Uniontown, Colton, Pullman, Colfax, Steptoe, Rosalia, and Spangle, WA. Arrives Spokane at 9:00 a.m.

All appointments for rides must be made 48 hours in advance.

Call the DAV Transportation Office at the Spokane VA Medical Center (800) 325-7940.

Thursdays: Walla Walla VA Medical Center. 6:00 a.m. departure from the State Veterans Home at 821 21st Avenue.

Picks up in Clarkston, Pomeroy, Dayton, Waitsburg, and Dixie, WA. Arrives at Walla Walla at 8:30 a.m.

All appointments for rides must be made 72 hours in advance.

Call the DAV Transportation Office at the Walla Walla VA Medical Center (888) 687-8863 ext. 22529

*****If you are interested in being a volunteer driver, please call Voluntary Services at (509) 434-7503*****

LIBBY & SURROUNDING AREA TO SPOKANE VAMC

Tuesdays and Thursdays: 6:00 a.m. departure from Libby, MT.

Picks up in Troy MT, Bonner's Ferry, Sandpoint, Priest River, and Newport WA. Arrives at Spokane VA Medical Center at 9:00 a.m.

All appointments for rides must be made 48 hours in advance.

Call the DAV Transportation Office at the Spokane VA Medical Center (800) 325-7940.

COEUR D'ALENE & SURROUNDING AREA TO SPOKANE VAMC

Daily: Door to door pick up and return, times variable.

All appointments for rides must be made 48 hours in advance.

Call the DAV Transportation Office at the Spokane VA Medical Center (800) 325-7940.

SANDPOINT & SURROUNDING AREA TO SPOKANE VAMC

Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays:

Picks up in Noxon, Clark Fork, Hope, Sandpoint, Laclede, Priest River, Newport, Diamond Lake, Chattaroy. Arrives at Walla Walla at 9:00 a.m.

All appointments for rides must be made 72 hours in advance.

Call the DAV Transportation Office at the Spokane VA Medical Center (800) 325-7940 ext. 7019.

SALT LAKE CITY VA MEDICAL CENTER

October 1, 3, 7, 9, 13, 15, 17, 21, 23, 27, 29, 31

November 4, 6, 10, 12, 14, 18, 20, 24, 26, 28

December 2, 4, 8, 10, 12, 16, 18, 22, 24, 26, 30

All appointments for rides should be made 24 hours in advance.

Call Heidi Hopper at the DAV Transportation Office (208) 221-0362 or (800) 613-4012 ext. 2003.



MOBILE CLINIC

OCTOBER ~ 2008						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 <i>On Station</i>	2 <i>On Station</i>	3	4
5	6	7 Kettle Falls	8 Republic	9 Okanogan	10 Okanogan	11
12	13	14 Moses Lake	15 Moses Lake	16 Moses Lake	17	18
19	20	21 Libby	22 Libby	23 Libby	24 Bonners Ferry	25
26	27 Moscow	28 Osburn	29 Osburn	30 <i>On Station</i>	31	

NOVEMBER ~ 2008						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3	4 Kettle Falls	5 Republic	6 Okanogan	7 Okanogan	8
9	10 <i>On Station</i>	11	12 Moses Lake	13 Moses Lake	14	15
16	17	18 Libby	19 Libby	20 Libby	21 Bonner Ferry	22
23	24 Moscow	25 Osburn	26 Osburn	27	28	29
30						

DECEMBER ~ 2008						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 <i>On Station</i>	2 Moses Lake	3 Moses Lake	4 Moses Lake	5	6
7	8	9 Kettle Falls	10 Republic	11 Okanogan	12 Okanogan	13
14	15	16 Libby	17 Libby	18 Libby	19 Bonners Ferry	20
21	22 <i>On Station</i>	23 <i>On Station</i>	24 <i>On Station</i>	25	26	27
28	29 <i>On Station</i>	30 <i>On Station</i>	31 <i>On Station</i>			